

Rockville's Bike Beltway: Coming Full Cycle

May is National Bicycle Month, and by then, the City of Rockville will have the perfect way to celebrate: The formal opening of the completed Millennium Trail.

A 10-mile loop around the City, the Millennium Trail is a continuous link of paved surfaces to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians more easily. The final phase – the stretch of path from Veirs Mill Road to West Edmonston Drive, connecting to Wootton Parkway – is scheduled for completion in March. Once that section is complete, the full 10-mile “bicycle beltway” will be connected, and ready for uninterrupted riding.

“This project has been a long time coming – since the turn of this century,” said Betsy Thompson, the City’s recreation program development coordinator. “Once it is completed, we will be planning a dedication or grand opening with the City’s Bicycle Advisory Committee, the Rockville Mayor and Council, and other public officials who helped make the trail possible.”

Funding for the Millennium Trail has been provided by various sources, including the City, a TEA-21 federal grant and private development.

Once the final construction phase is complete, the City will begin marking the trail with a bikeway signage system that will provide a coordi-

nated system of signs to help bicyclists navigate the City’s extensive network of shared-use paths, neighborhood bike routes and through-city bike routes. The City won a matching grant in the amount of \$15,000 from the National Recreational Trails to partially pay for the signs.

“Signs are needed to indicate how to get to Town Center, as well as to libraries, post offices, schools, businesses and other widely used locations around town,” said Nancy Breen, chair of the City’s Bicycle Advisory Committee. “The new directional signs will be installed all along the Rockville’s bike routes this winter in time for spring biking.”

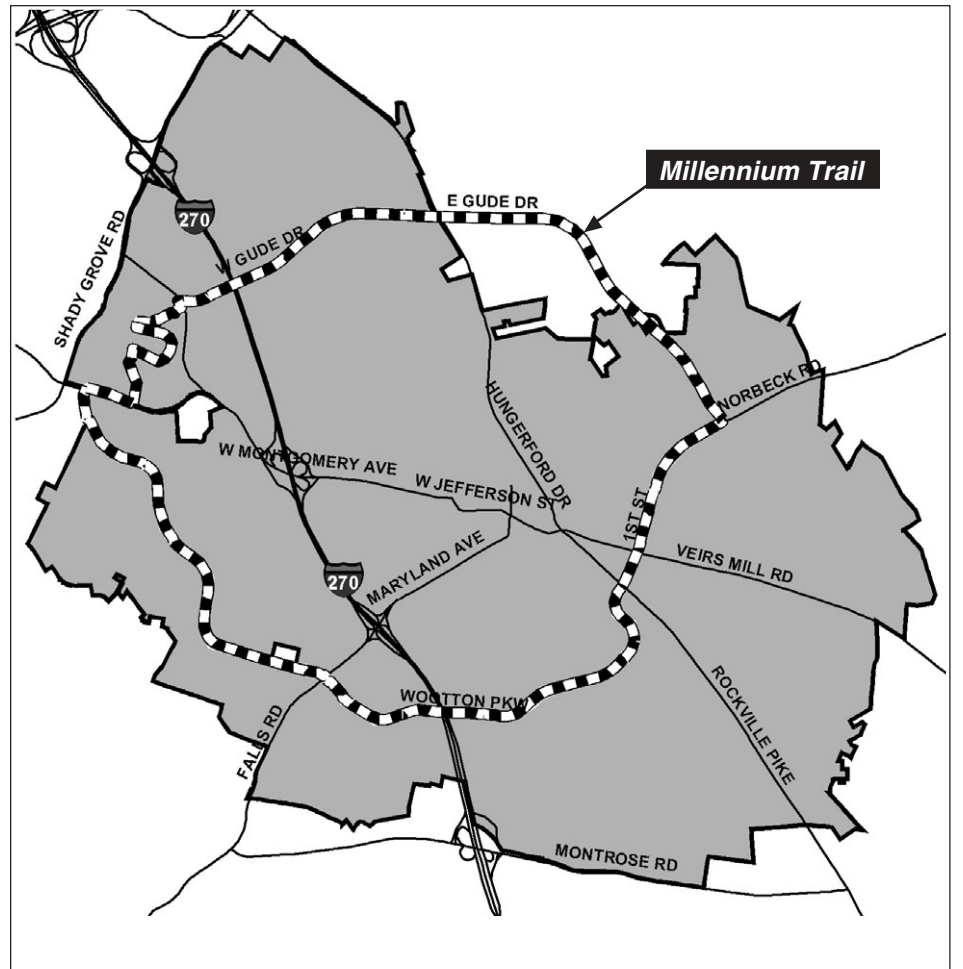
With the new “bicycle beltway” comes opportunities for residents and commuters.

“I think the easier we make it for people to cycle and walk in Rockville, the more they will,” Breen said. “If biking and walking are as easy as driving a car, I think people will choose to walk or bike because it’s more pleasant and it affords exercise while getting to the destination.”

If people want to bike but aren’t sure where to start, they can write to the RBAC listserv address at RBAC_Listserve@yahoo.com.

For more information about the project, visit the City’s Bikeway Plan at www.rockvillemd.gov/recreation.

CALL 240-314-8627 FOR MORE INFO



The Millennium Trail, marked with the dash line above, is a 10-mile, multi-use path encircling the City of Rockville. The final link is set to be completed in March. The path is an invaluable tool for walkers, bicyclists or those looking to easily commute throughout the City without a car. The City will soon celebrate completion of the final link of the Millennium Trail, which has been under construction since May 2000.

Millennium Trail Final Link Will Be Completed In March



This section of the Millennium Trail along Norbeck Road is now complete. The above photos show the progress of the trail from February 2005 (left) and February 2006 (right).



The final construction phase connects Veirs Mill Road to Wootton Parkway, and is expected to be completed in March. Pictured above is the connection on West Edmonston Drive at Wootton Parkway.

Rec and Parks Projects

GENERAL PROJECTS

Bikeway Route Signs • Installation of signs along all designated “Bike Routes” to begin in March and be completed by May. Partially funded by National Recreational Trails Program.

City Hall Improvements • Reorganization and renovation of second and third floor interior spaces of City Hall for improved use efficiencies, accessibility and life safety compliance, plus technological upgrades • Construction is in the final phase and is expected to be completed by March.

Civic Center Long Range Plan • Feasibility study underway to identify adequate and accessible parking, vehicular and pedestrian access and stormwater management on the Civic Center grounds • Final design and construction cost estimates will be completed in June.

Dog Park • Design has been incorporated into Mattie J. T. Stepanek Park • Final design has been completed • Rockville Dog Owners Group (RDOG) continues to participate in the process.

Gude Drive Facility Improvements • Modernization and expansion of the City’s Public Works and Parks maintenance complex in four phases • Phase I includes replacement of the salt dome, stormwater management upgrades, access improvements and improved debris storage • Project postponed due to budget constraints.

I-270/Route 28 Bike/Pedestrian Bridge • Separate bridge for pedestrians and bicyclists parallel to Route 28 on south side across I-270 to connect Hurley Avenue and Nelson Street bikeways • TEA-21 grant for \$3,124,421 received from State Highway Administration • Bid award in progress with additional

TEA funds requested from MDSHA. If received, construction will begin in May and last approximately 18 months.

King Farm Farmstead • Courtesy review by Historic District Commission complete. Preparing to re-bid project. Re-construction of hay drying shed to begin in spring.

Mattie J.T. Stepanek Park • Construction documents finalized • Phase I - construction bid awarded in January. Expect Phase I completion in Fall.

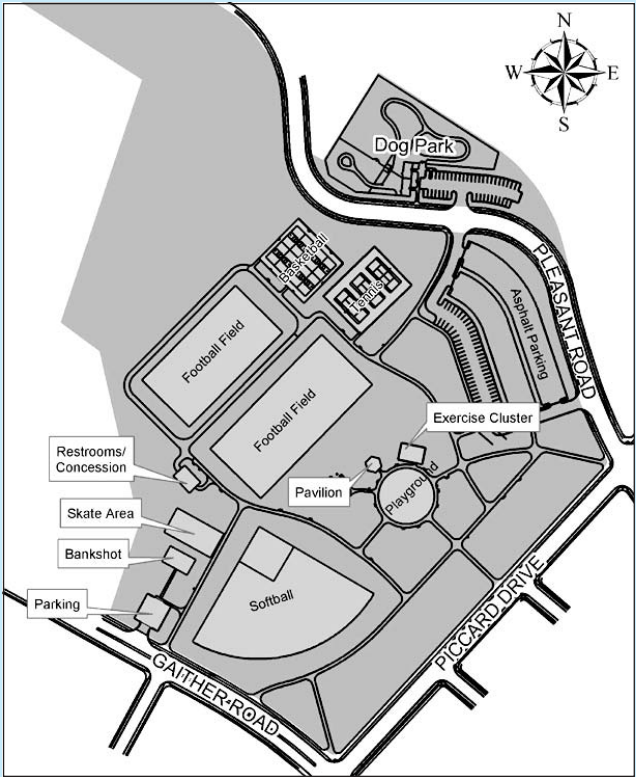
Millennium Trail • Final section under construction • Veirs Mill Road to W. Edmonston Drive construction began in fall 2005 with final paving in spring • Majority of cost of project covered by TEA-21 grant awarded by Maryland State Highway Administration.

Playground Equipment Improvements • Falls Grove Park equipment to be installed in the spring • Installation pending land transfer from developer to City • Stepanek Park equipment installation scheduled for summer.

Rockville Municipal Swim Center Meeting/Fitness Room • Architectural and engineer services contract awarded in January • Design work will begin in spring.

Thomas Farm Community Center • Concept design was presented to the public in October 2005 • Architect working on detail design due this spring.

Urban Forest Renewal • Removal of aging and hazardous trees in Twinbrook, Fallsmead, Potomac Woods and other neighborhoods is ongoing • Replacement plantings to take place in spring and fall.



MATTIE J.T. STEPANEK PARK CONSTRUCTION BEGINS... *The 26.3-acre Mattie J. T. Stepanek Park in the King Farm community is a step closer to reality. Construction has begun, and the images of a playground, walking paths and green space are easily imagined. Above is a chart of draft plans for the park named for the poet and peacemaker, who died in June 2004, a month before his 14th birthday. Mattie, who lived at King Farm with his mother, Jeni, lived a remarkable life, including writing books of poetry that made the New York Times bestseller list, before succumbing to a rare muscular disease.*

Public Works Projects

TRANSPORTATION

Bike/Pedestrian Improvements • Flashing beacons at the intersection of Nelson and Azalea Streets were installed and are currently operational • Eight pedestrian signals with countdown LED lenses were installed at the intersection of Route 28 and Great Falls Road • Sidewalk installation on Mannakee Street from Beall Ave. to Carr Ave.: Complete • Sidewalk installation on Lynch Street from Beall Ave. to Anderson Ave. and Calvin Lane near Meadow Hall Elementary under design: Construction scheduled for summer • Sidewalk installation on Argyle Street at Maryland Ave. to Monroe Street: Construction tentatively scheduled to begin in summer • Bus Shelters: Eight bus shelters were installed during the first week of January.

Improve Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety at School • Short-term measures including pavement markings and signs are complete. Ritchie Park Elementary School, College Gardens Elementary School, and Meadow Hall Elementary Schools are participating in a 15-mph speed limit pilot project from January through June.

Falls Grove-Funded Transportation Improvements • Majority of the projects are complete • Remaining projects include I-270 ramp and Shady Grove Road.

Red Light Cameras • The installation of two new red light cameras along Maryland 28 in the Town Center (Eastbound Maryland 28 at South Washington Street and Westbound Maryland 28 at Maryland Avenue) is complete. Cameras are scheduled for testing in March.

STREAM & STORMWATER IMPROVEMENTS

Alsace Lane Stream Restoration • Design underway on 500 feet of stream in the Rock Creek drainage area • Construction planned for summer.

Carnation/I-270 SWM Retrofit • Modify existing stormwater management facilities to implement stream erosion control in Watts Branch drainage area • Design complete • Construction planned for winter 2006-07.

College Gardens Low Impact Design (LID) SWM Study • Consultants evaluated various LID techniques on public and private property to improve Watts Branch water quality and reduce runoff • LID Assessment Report was presented to the Mayor and Council in December • Opportunities for LID measures will be pursued after the College Gardens Park/Pond Modification Project.

College Gardens Park/Pond Modification • Develop alternative concept designs that will balance SWM needs with active and passive park recreation features and natural resource preservation (trees, streams and wetlands) • SWM alternatives include: Retrofitting the existing farm pond to an extended detention wet pond with marsh fringe; and locating a new pond outside the College Gardens Park, within the tributary area. If the existing park pond is modified, park amenities may be replaced, relocated, or modified • Alternative concepts will be developed and reviewed in close coordination with the

community • Will recommend preferred alternative to Mayor and Council.

Drainage Improvement at Longwood/Pinewood Intersection • Design is underway to relieve occasional street flooding during major rainstorms • Construction is planned for summer.

Maryvale SWM and Park Improvements • Existing dual-use ballfield/SWM facility will be modified to create a separate soccer field and stormwater marsh • Design is ongoing • Construction is planned for winter 2006-07.

North Horners Lane Stream Improvement • 200 feet of stream restoration was completed in December.

RedGate Golf Course Stormwater Management Retrofits • Modify existing SWM facilities and improve 600 feet of stream in Rock Creek drainage area • Construction is ongoing with completion expected in April.

Rockcrest Stream Improvement • 1,600 feet of stream restoration in the Rock Creek watershed is being designed. Construction is planned for summer.

Woottons Mill Stream Improvement • 4,400 feet of stream restoration in the Watts Branch Watershed is substantially complete.

UTILITIES

Adclare Water Main Replacement • Approximately 1,500 feet of six-inch water main under Adclare Road and will be replaced with eight-inch water main • Design is ongoing • Construction is planned for summer.

Evans Street Sewer • Sewer replacement for approximately 300 feet of six-inch PVC sewer at 110 and 112 Evans Street is under design • Construction is planned for spring.

Sewer Rehabilitation • Sewer evaluation survey, including flow monitoring and video inspection of underground piping for the southeastern area of Twinbrook, has been completed • Rehabilitation will be done in February.

WATER IMPROVEMENTS

Glen Mill Pump Station • Project will provide the additional pumping capacity needed to provide sufficient water supply to the entire Rockville water system • Construction started in September 2004 and will be completed this spring.

Horizon Hills Water Mains • The conditions of water mains in this area are being assessed • Test pits will be dug in this area to expose the pipes • Pipe replacement may be required, depending on pipe condition • City maintenance crews will excavate test pits in the winter through early spring.

Water Treatment Plant • Major upgrade in the treatment plant to support a maximum daily production of 14 million gallons is essentially complete • Construction of covers over the filter wells is complete • An emergency generator has been added • Improvements to sludge handling facilities are being studied.



The sidewalk on Mannakee Street is one of the newest additions by the City's Department of Public Works in an effort to fill in some "missing links."

Filling in 'Missing Links'

The City Adds Sidewalks to Bridge Gaps in Critical Pedestrian Walking and Bicycling Areas

Ever wonder how sidewalks appear in neighborhoods? One day there is dirt, and the next there is a work crew that magically transforms nothing into a convenient pedestrian pathway.

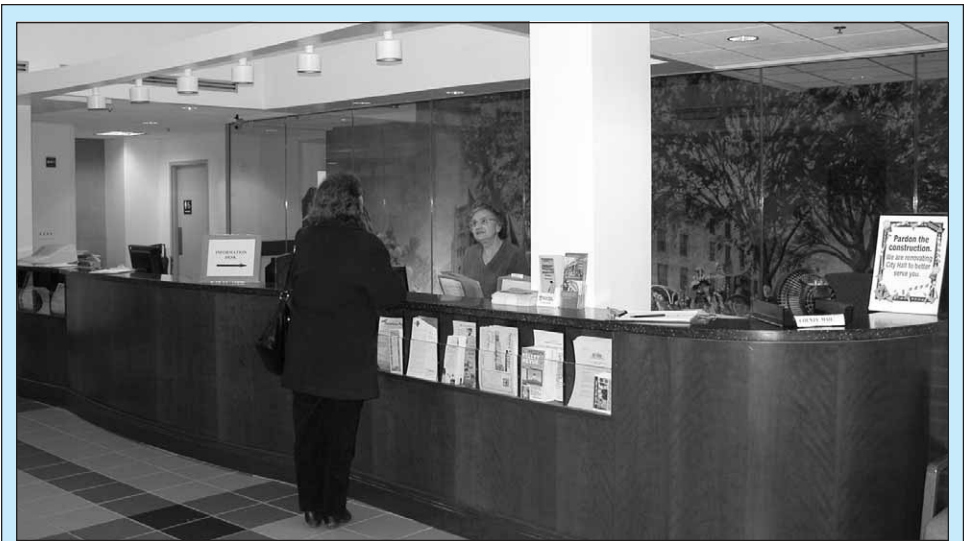
Like many things, the development of a new City sidewalk is no simple task. There are Mayor and Council meetings, public comment, staff research and more meetings to determine the feasibility and necessity of something as simply perceived as a sidewalk. Behind the extensive decision-making process are the behind-the-scenes people making it all happen.

"There are a good deal of missing links in Rockville," said Carrie Sanders, transportation planner with the City's Department of Public Works, speaking about areas where there are no connecting sidewalks for appropriate pedestrian access. "We are trying to identify the most critical areas in terms of proximity to schools, Metro systems or roads with no pedestrian access at all."

To do this, the City's Traffic and Transportation Division has been examining best practices of other municipalities around the country to formulate a base of how Rockville could proceed toward developing a report of priority areas.

The most recent sidewalk addition is along Mannakee Street between Beall Avenue and Carr Avenue. There are three more currently in the design phase: Along Lynch Avenue, Argyle Street and Calvin Lane, with others in the pipeline. Check "City Project Updates" in *Rockville Reports* for the latest additions. ■

CALL 240-314-8500 FOR MORE INFO



WELCOME TO THE NEW CITY HALL... After more than a year of significant renovations, Rockville's City Hall is finally finished with its make-over. Well, almost. All major construction is set for completion in March. The new layout was designed to increase office space for employees while also making the building more inviting and customer friendly. When walking into the main lobby on the third floor (pictured above), visitors will be greeted by front desk staff of the Information Desk to the backdrop of the preserved mural of the Rockville Memorial Day Parade. On the second level, new counter areas for Public Works and Community Planning and Development Services (pictured below) are ready for business.

City Hall Renovations Create Re-worked Spaces

Who's on What Level?
 2nd Level departments include: Community Planning and Development Services; Personnel; Public Works; and Purchasing Division.
 3rd Level departments include: City Manager's Office; City Clerk's Office; City Attorney's Office; Information Desk; Information and Technology; Finance; Mayor and Council Chambers; and Recreation and Parks.

The Police Department is still located on the first level. Community Services Department and the Code Enforcement Division are still located at 20 Courthouse Square, Suite 205.



desperately needed meeting spaces have been enhanced and relocated throughout City Hall. Each of the nine meeting rooms were renamed to represent elements of nature that are indigenous to the State of Maryland.

Meeting rooms will now be known as: Blue Crab, Black-Eyed Susan, Diamondback Terrapin, Gray Fox, Red Maple, Oriole, Gold Finch and Purple Finch. ■

New Names for the New Rooms
 As part of the City Hall renovations,

Woodley Gardens Pedestrians Safer on Nelson Street

Along Nelson Street in Rockville, pedestrians will soon discover that crossing the street is a bit easier.

A pedestrian-activated flashing beacon was completed and functional in November at the intersection of Nelson Street and Azalea Drive.

Pavement markings along to notify drivers of "pedestrians crossing ahead" at Azalea Drive and of a "stop sign ahead" at Crocus Drive (along Nelson Street also were installed.)

The City held a public meeting in February 2004 to gather ideas to improve pedestrian safety in the Woodley Gardens neighborhood. Additional public comment was accepted via a community notice sent in July 2005.

As a result of the public comments, field visits, a preliminary survey and engineering, City Traffic

and Transportation Division Project Coordinator Nazar Saleh opted for the beacon technology in order to maintain the parking configuration along Nelson Street.

The high volume of pedestrian traffic from the Woodley Gardens neighborhood to the Woodley Gardens Park and pool across Nelson Street was one of the prime motivating factors for the addition of the flashing pedestrian light.

Pedestrians attempting to cross Nelson Street can activate the flashing yellow light to warn motorists of their crossing. By law, motorists are to yield to pedestrians who are legally in a crosswalk. The flashing yellow lights, pavement markings and warning signs will alert motorists to pedestrians in the crosswalk. ■

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Pedestrians can activate a flashing yellow light at the newly installed crosswalk system on Nelson Street at Azalea Drive to warn motorists they are attempting to cross the busy street.



Black tubes and a metal box are part of the devices used to measure the volume of traffic on roads in Rockville.

One car, two cars... Turning to City Traffic Monitoring

Traffic is a concern for many who live in Rockville. Often the City receives requests for traffic control signs such as stop signs, speed limit signs or other modifications to streets due to a perceived increase in traffic. In addition to evaluating these requests, the City also is developing an enhanced process for monitoring and evaluating the need for traffic adjustments.

"Our plan is very proactive," said Emad Elshafei, acting chief of the Division of Traffic and Transportation. "We are collecting and organizing comprehensive data throughout the City, in addition to those areas that citizens are especially concerned about."

The Traffic and Transportation Division of the City's Department of Public Works oversees the Traffic Counting program. Every two to three years the City collects data on arterial streets and primary residential streets, which not only helps assess improvements that need to be made, but also can help the City identify long-term trends.

In the future, the City hopes to make this information available to citizens through the City Web site.

Traffic monitoring is accomplished in two ways. The first is through special electronic equipment that is set up on the road. A metal box on the side of the street is connected to two long black tubes laid across the street.

In March, the City will perform mechanical counts near three elementary schools to monitor the effects of the "Slower Speeds, Safer Schools" program that creates 15 mph speed limits before and after school. The results will be compared to data collected in January to measure the program's effectiveness.

The other way the City monitors traffic is by conducting a manual count of the number of cars, pedestrians and bicyclists that pass through an intersection. Several of these turning movement counts will be conducted in March at the following intersections:

- Tower Oaks Blvd/I-270 Ramp/Geico entrance
- Wootton Parkway/Henslowe Drive
- Wootton Parkway/Rockshire Shopping Center
- Wootton Parkway/Wootton High School entrance ■



Above is an example of one of the new City of Rockville bus shelters commuters will find.

Taking Shelter: Rockville Installs Eight New Bus Shelters

Something as simple as standing under a bus shelter in the pouring rain can make someone's day just a little easier.

Installing these areas of refuge from the rain, wind or bright sunlight along public transportation routes in the City of Rockville is just one of the many areas of responsibility that falls within the Division of Traffic and Transportation of the City's Department of Public Works.

The City recently installed eight new bus shelters, at the following locations:

- Two on Frederick Avenue in front of the Lincoln Park Community Center
- One in front of 611 Rockville Pike by the Sandy Spring Bank
- One in front of Courtesy Jeep Eagle Car Dealership on Rockville Pike
- One on Halpine Road at the Chevy Chase Bank
- One on southbound Rockville Pike in front of the Congressional South Shopping Center
- One on northbound Rockville Pike

between Bouic Avenue and Thompson Avenue

- One on northbound Shady Grove Road at Choke Cherry Road

The shelters are part of a City program to enhance transit ridership by improving passengers' comfort and safety, and providing protection from bad weather. The locations of the shelters were chosen on two criteria: 1) near new developments, where the developers were required to contribute funds to install bus shelters; and 2) at bus stops with the highest ridership numbers per day.

"Any way that we can help give commuters an incentive to try alternative means of transportation is worth it," said Katherine Kelly, a transportation planner for the City. "We are trying to encourage people to get out of their cars to reduce traffic congestion. Providing bus shelters is just another step in that direction." ■

CALL 240-314-8500 FOR MORE INFO



SMILE OR FROWN – NOT THE CANDID CAMERA PICTURE YOU WANT... Two more red light cameras were installed in the City of Rockville and are expected to be tested and operational in March. Red light cameras along Route 28 at Maryland Avenue (camera pictured above) and at South Washington Street were recently installed by the City's Department of Public Works. Red light cameras are engineered to take a still, color photograph of cars passing through an intersection after the light has already turned red. The addition of these two cameras raises the total red light cameras operated by the City to eight. Statistics show the cameras have been extremely effective in deterring red light runners.